

# Southern Ute Vocational Rehabilitation Newsletter

## Let's Put the Person First, Not the Disability

Do the words used to describe *you* have an impact on *your life*? You bet! Contrary to the age-old "sticks and stones" lesson we learned as children, words *do* matter! For too long, people who happen to have conditions we call "disabilities" have been subjected to devaluation, marginalization, prejudice, and more. And the first way to devalue someone is through language, by using words or labels to identify a person/group as "less-than," as "the others—not like us," and so forth. Once a person/group has been identified this way, it makes it easier to justify prejudice and discrimination. Our language shapes our attitudes; our attitudes shape our language; they're intertwined. And our attitudes and language *drive our actions*!

Using People First Language—putting the person before the disability—and eliminating old, prejudicial, and *hurtful* descriptors, can move us in a new direction. People First Language is not political correctness; instead, it demonstrates good manners, respect, the Golden Rule, and more—it *can change the way we see a person, and it can change the way a person sees herself / himself*!

### SAY:

People with disabilities  
She has autism (or a diagnosis of)  
He has a mental health condition.  
She has a learning disability.  
She uses a wheelchair.  
Brain injury  
He has a physical disability.

### INSTEAD OF:

the disabled or handicapped  
She is autistic.  
He is mentally ill.  
She is learning disabled.  
She is confined to a wheelchair.  
Brain damaged  
He is crippled.

For more information, you can visit the Disability is Natural website at [www.disabilityisnatural.com/](http://www.disabilityisnatural.com/)



## Helping Hands

Without referrals from other agencies and other agency cooperation, Southern Ute Tribal Vocational Rehabilitation would not be able to assist our consumers to the fullest extent. Collaboration, cooperation, and communication between our Tribal Vocational Rehabilitation Program and other programs, both within Tribal Government and outside agencies, is the key to a successful outcome for all involved. From referrals both to and from: doctors; other Vocational Rehabilitation Programs; schools; and TERO, just to name a few, the sharing of information and services is invaluable. We all have the same goal: to provide services to assist the consumer in reaching *their* employment goal.

Although many folks seek assistance from us on their own, many are referred to us. In order to assist clients we must have them sign "releases" in order to engage with different agencies. Different agencies range from doctors to employers and may require one release of information to several depending on the circumstances. This confidential information is valuable in accessing a person's needs and how we can best serve them. We have found that sometimes we are able to provide a service that another program working with a person cannot. In these situations, our services added to the support from the other program help us to provide a person with a network of support.

I want to thank all of the hard working and caring individuals for helping us help our consumers! We all can make a difference.



Gail Cross  
Acting Vocational Rehabilitation Program Manager

## SEQUESTRATION!!!

What is *sequestration* and how will it impact services for Native Americans with disabilities?

Sequestration means across-the-board spending cuts to our federal budget. Right now, no one is absolutely certain how it will affect Native Americans with disabilities. We do know that any cuts are a giant step backward - wounding an already under-served population.

I am attending a 15 month Tribal Vocational Rehabilitation (TVR) Administrative certification course. It's a mouthful I know! Recently in class, we had the opportunity to address the issue of sequestration with a member of the Democratic National Committee (DNC) via telephone. She wanted to learn as much as she could in regards to TVR Programs so she could take the information to the table to move forward and argue against any budget cuts towards our programs. Here is a condensed version of what we discussed with the DNC representative:

### **INTRODUCTION TO AMERICAN INDIAN VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION (AIVR)**

Native American individuals experience disability at an increased rate (1 ½ times) compared to the majority population (according to the University of Montana Research and Training Center on Disability). State Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) agencies, while authorized and willing to serve all citizens who experience disability, have not effectively been able to serve Native American individuals who experience disability. Data from The Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) indicates that the number of Native Americans served by State VR agencies do not parallel the number of Native Americans who make up our national population. Congress recognized this fact and through the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, Congress established funding for Tribal VR programs over 30 years ago to serve Native American individuals in a way that is relevant to their culture and language to address the disparity that exists.

In 2011, 83 funded AIVR agencies served 8,069 Native Americans with disabilities and achieved a 67% success rate which means that 67% of the individuals exiting the programs' services, exited into successful, long-term competitive employment.

**Funding challenges:** Currently, AIVR agencies are funded as discretionary grants on a 5-year competitive grant basis. This means that every 5 years an AIVR program must reapply for funding (unlike state VR agencies which are automatically funded). Competitive funding limits long-term planning and contributes to the continuing disparity in services provided.

Without the effective services provided by these AIVR agencies, Native Americans with disabilities, including the 18.9% of Native American veterans who have a service-connected disability (in comparison to the 15.6% of veterans of all other races who experience a service-connected disability), will be forced to turn to federal income-based entitlement programs for their basic subsistence instead of obtaining integrated, self-supporting employment.

Breaking this forced dependence on income-based federal entitlement programs by achieving self-supporting employment, these individuals not only impact their own lives but the lives of their children and grandchildren, breaking generation-long dependency on federal entitlement programs.

As employees, these individuals become tax payers and contributors to our nation's best resource – our workforce. AIVR is not only a good investment in the human services realm, but for the nation's economy.

Sequestration is going to hit us all in some form and it seems the hardest hit may be the most under-served populations. We will continue to educate and inform the "*powers that be*" in an effort to help them understand how employing Native Americans with disabilities is not only good for the Nation financially, but in a humanitarian way as well.

Gail Cross, Acting Program Manager

### 5 Ways to Bust Out of a Bad Mood

**Incorporate calming colors into your life** – studies have shown that colors can affect our moods. Surround yourself with calming colors or, just colors you enjoy.

**Hit the treadmill or take a walk:** Working up a sweat can flood your brain with endorphins - the chemicals in the brain responsible for making you feel like a million. A Penn State study showed that even if you aren't a religious gym-goer, if you go on a quick morning walk or workout, you can feel happier – and more productive – for the rest of that day. What's even more interesting: If you've been down in the dumps and are feeling less than motivated to sweat it out, you're the one that's going to get the biggest happy high – and it'll kick in within the first twenty minutes of your workout or walk.

**Eat more fish:** Some studies show that omega-3 fatty acids (which are found in fish such as salmon, shrimp, summer flounder, trout, and tuna) can help lower depression-like feelings. One study found that consuming a fish-rich diet twice a week resulted in a lower risk of depression. How the fish is prepared makes a big difference; it should be baked or broiled, rather than fried.

**Connections and Culture:** Think you need to be on a tropical island for everything to be all right? Maybe not. A 2006 study showed that Iceland might actually have some of the happiest people in the world. *Close social connections, plus a strong arts and culture scene,* may explain

why many Icelanders remain content in the face of volcanic eruptions, sub-arctic temperatures, and days with as few as four hours of daylight.

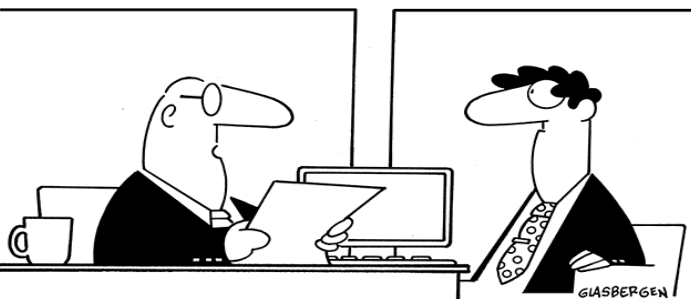
**Make use of that To-Do List:** While being laid-back and following the 'don't worry, be happy' mindset may seem like the way to go, experts say that having goals and reaching them could really be the secret to feeling fulfilled. So, redo that closet that looks like it's going to explode or tackle whatever woulda-coulda-shoulda thing you haven't gotten around to yet. Research shows that ambition, not low expectations, are deemed more valuable, and therefore can make you feel more satisfied with your life.

Website citation: <http://www.refinery29.com/how-to-get-out-of-a-bad-mood>

*Never underestimate the power of  
dreams and the influence of the  
human spirit. We are all the same in  
this notion:  
The potential for greatness  
lives within each of us."*

*~ Wilma Rudolph*

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*"Allen is an incredibly wonderful, generous, exciting,  
fun, kind, loving, brilliant, very special human being.  
This personal reference from your dog is quite impressive."*

*A special thank you to  
Ms. Lynda Grove-D'Wolf  
for donating a copy of her new  
Ute Language DVD software entitled:  
Kavía Nuccie Nú-u-apá ga-pí  
(The Mountain Utes Language)  
to the Southern Ute  
Vocational Rehabilitation Program!*

### Handy Advice When on a Job Search

Make sure you have all your credentials and references readily available – keep your resume' up-to-date. Applicants who do, are considered to be more serious about obtaining the position.

Do your research on the company or organization. Knowledge about their background, mission statement, policies, etc. will show that are interested.

Network – the more friends, colleagues, and acquaintances you talk to, the more the word can get out that you are looking for work.

Be confident! Failure to express yourself with confident will show that you are not self-assured in your abilities.

Never show that you are desperate; this may get you the job, but possibly at a lower salary or with less benefits if HR feels they are your last resort. Maintain a level of pride to show that you uphold a certain standard.

Ask questions! This will give you all the information you will need to know about the job's advantages and disadvantages.

Do not give up! If you do not get the job, keep looking! The right job is out there for you!



### Southern Ute Voc Rehab Program

116 Capote Drive  
PO Box 737  
Ignacio, CO 81137

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Phone: (970) 563-4730  
Fax: (970) 563-4840  
Email:  
brosa@southernute-nsn.gov  
gcross@southernute-nsn.gov

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## Do You Qualify for Vocational Rehabilitation services?

Take this simple quiz to see if you may qualify for VR services:

- | <u>Yes</u>               | <u>No</u>                |   |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | I am an enrolled member of a Native American tribe  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | I have a physical or mental impairment which makes it difficult to find or keep a job (examples include: diabetes, alcohol dependence, substance dependence, hearing loss, learning disability, etc). |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | I live on or near the Southern Ute Indian reservation   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | I am interested in obtaining long-term employment   |

***Making Change Work for You!***

If you think you or someone you know may benefit from Vocational Rehabilitation, please call 970-563-4730.

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